

Summer 2016 – Take Time to Read

By Stephanie Avidon, PARP Specialist

The **New York State Library** system has a summer reading program: “On Your Mark, Get Set... Read!” Find downloadable materials and free resources [here](#).

Scholastic has a summer reading challenge. Their challenge began May 9, 2016 and goes through September 9, 2016. Children are challenged to record their reading in an online log and can “Be a Reading Hero”. Children can participate in weekly challenges, earn rewards, enter sweepstakes, win prizes and help set a new reading world record for summer 2016. For more information, click [here](#).

Barnes and Noble has a summer reading program: Summer Reading Triathlon. Children can earn a free book after completing a reading journal. Program ends September 6, 2016. Click [here](#) for more information.

PBS has created a whole page on their website devoted to parents “Raising a Reader”. There is so much information here – tips for



reading with boys, how to read with girls, developmental milestones and reading for babies to 3rd grade. Visit their webpage [here](#).

Summertime reading for all ages by **RIF** (Reading Is Fundamental) can be found [here](#).

Reading Rockets summer reading recommendations for children can be found [here](#).

Sylvan Book Adventure is a free reading motivation program (grades K-8). For more information, click [here](#).

SummerReads offers free texts aimed at “getting students ready” for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. Check it out [here](#).



Adolescent Literacy has resources which focus on kids in grades 4-12. Click [here](#) for more information.

The **ALSC** (Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association) has summer reading list suggestions. For more information, click [here](#).

Lexile framework – Find the right book for your child’s reading level [here](#).

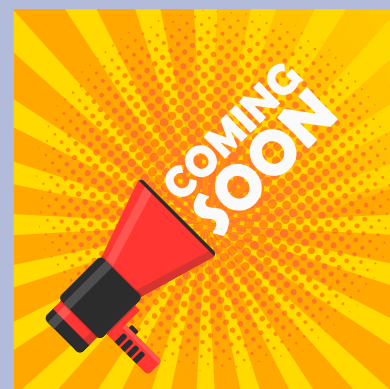
Coming Soon: NEW and Improved Online Membership System

In late August, we will be rolling out a new and improved online membership system for the upcoming school year on a brand-new platform.

What does this mean for you?

Renewing your PTA membership will be easier than ever!

Make sure you keep an eye on your email this fall. Your local PTA may be sending you an email reminder with a link to quickly and easily renew your PTA membership.



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MESSAGE FROM BONNIE RUSSELL, NYS PTA PRESIDENT



Bonnie's Corner



NYS PTA President Bonnie Russell shares "Announcement of New Executive Director" in her "Voice of NYS PTA" blog post.

Click [here](#) to read her latest message.



MESSAGE FROM LAURA BAY, NATIONAL PTA PRESIDENT



Laura's Corner

National PTA President Laura Bay shares some tips on keeping your kids engaged in summer learning in her "One Voice" blog post.

Click [here](#) to read her message.



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NEW YORK Parent Teacher

President:

Bonnie Russell

Editor:

Aimee Tweedie

Advisor:

Judy Van Haaren

New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.

One Wembley Court, Albany, NY 12205-3830

Phone: 518-452-8808

Toll Free: 1-877-5NYSPTA

1-877-569-7782 • Fax: 518-452-8105

Web: nyspta.org

Email: pta.office@nyspta.org

What is Advocacy and Why Do I Need to Get Involved?

By Susanne Smoller, Legislation Coordinator

From the moment you paid for your PTA membership, you became an advocate.

PTA is the largest advocacy organization for children, youth and families.

However, the concept of advocacy seems so foreign and at times fearful to many members.

What you may not realize is that you have been advocating for your children for some time.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you attended a parent/teacher conference?
- Have you asked for help for your child?
- Have you signed a petition?

- Have you attended a school board meeting?
- Have you attended education programs related to issues impacting children, youth and families?
- Have you written a letter in support of an issue?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are an advocate.

In the context of PTA, advocacy is supporting and speaking up for children and youth in schools, in communities and before government bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting them.

What you may not realize is that PTA started with three women looking to make changes for children in difficult times.

From these women, PTA was born.

This movement focused to begin incredible advocacy on issues such as child labor laws, safe routes to school, quality education for all children, safe schools and communities, fair juvenile justice laws, and child health and nutrition.

Check out this YouTube video about [PTA's History of Advocacy](#).

Many advocacy efforts began with a parent saying, “this must change for all children.”

I recall one local issue – a parent didn't like how fast cars were driving in the back of the school.

She started a movement and worked hard, with the PTA, to get the speed limit changed.

This was because she saw an issue that not only impacted her child, but all children. You can do that, too.

To learn more about PTA advocacy, please go to the [NYS PTA Advocacy Page](#) and the [National PTA Advocacy Page](#).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Susanne Smoller, at legislation@nyspta.org.



Back-to-School PTA Meeting

By Aimee Tweedie, NYPT Editor | Communications / Marketing Manager

Even though the sun is shining and you are in “vacation mode,” here are a few things that you might want to think about before you attend your school’s first PTA meeting of the year.

Did you vote on a new PTA budget before school ended? If not, you may be voting on a new budget. You will be able to see where your PTA’s money is coming from, and how your PTA is spending your membership dues and

other income. Ask questions if you don’t understand something.

Did your PTA form an Audit Committee and audit the books last year? Was it a “clean” audit, meaning your PTA’s resources and funds are properly accounted for and managed? Your PTA should be doing an audit every year.

At [NYS PTA's Annual Convention](#) in November, resolutions are voted on by Convention del-

egates. You have the opportunity to learn about and vote on resolutions. If you are interested in seeing democracy in action, ask your PTA leadership if you could attend Convention.

Did your PTA run a [Reflections](#), [PARP](#) or other great program last year? You may want to ask how you can get involved. If not, ask why your PTA doesn’t have these programs. You can even offer to help create or run a new program.

Get Ready for Convention 2016

By Laurie May, 2016 Convention Coordinator

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the New York State PTA, it is our pleasure to invite you to the [120th New York State PTA Annual Convention](#) in picturesque Saratoga Springs, New York, on November 11-13, 2016.

Did you know that Saratoga Springs was and is known for its natural spring waters? There are a number of public springs located throughout the city, and the water is yours for the taking! Saratoga Springs is also world famous for horseracing, which will be evident when you walk through this charming town.

Why should you come to Convention; what's in it for you? Without a doubt, you, as a Convention attendee, can gain a greater sense of what PTA is all about, and come away invigorated, inspired and informed.

You will meet others who, like you, have a passion for PTA as well as a deep sense of responsibility to speak for all children, and who want to be involved and educated on issues pertaining to policies that will make a difference in the lives of children.

If you attend Convention, you will:

- Meet and engage with others who believe in our mission to be the voice of all children.
- Participate in interesting and informative workshop sessions to learn about our state-wide issues and exchange ideas.

- Elect your new state officers.
- Partake in debate and determine resolutions long held by our association to be retained or updated, as well as adopting new resolutions.
- Hear from a National PTA Representative and other inspirational keynote speakers.
- Visit the Exhibitor Showcase and the Reflections Art Exhibit.
- Celebrate the talents of our students with great entertainment while you have a great time!

As a PTA member, you belong to the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy association in the world.

The theme for the 2016 Convention, "Communicate to Advocate", adheres to our deep belief in our mission for children and recognizes that a uniquely talented, well-informed membership, working collaboratively with today's educational partners, can and will ignite ideas, effect positive change, and inspire others!

Look for online registration information before the new school year starts.

Join us and you'll see why we will be in Saratoga Springs, November 11-13, 2016, advocating for all children!

Mark your calendar and don't miss the 120th Annual NYS PTA Convention! We'll be waiting to meet you at the starting gate, ready to have a great Convention!





SAVE THE DATE

120th Annual Convention

November 11-13, 2016



The Saratoga Hilton Hotel
 Saratoga Springs City Center
 Saratoga Springs, NY

2016 REGISTRATION FEE SCHEDULE:

Full Conference

(includes two nights hotel, meals and convention fees)

	Fee if Postmarked by 10/2/16	Fee if Postmarked after 10/2/16
PTA Member – Single	\$620	\$645
PTA Member – Double	\$475	\$500
PTA Member – Triple	\$440	\$465
Student (21 & under) – Single	\$530	\$555
Student (21 & under) – Double	\$400	\$425

Non-Hotel Registrants/Full Conference

(includes meals and convention fees)

PTA Member	\$360	\$385
Student (21 & under)	\$285	\$310

One Day Delegate Registration (Saturday or Sunday)

(Convention fees only; Meals at additional cost)

PTA Member	\$90/day	\$90/day
Student (21 & under)	\$45/day	\$45/day

*Registrations received after October 2, 2016 will be processed as on-site registrations and hotel rooms CANNOT be guaranteed.

Stay Healthy and Safe This Summer

By Lucille Vitale, Wellness Coordinator

Summer is finally here! This means people out and about at beaches, parks, pools, barbecues and many other outdoor venues and events.

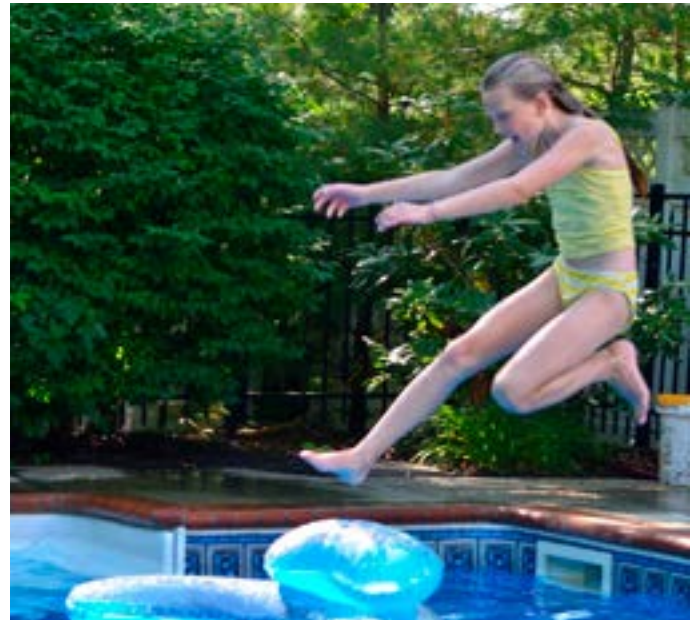
Being outdoors for longer periods of time and engaging in typical summer activities can pose some risks, so please be prepared.

Learn how to protect yourself this summer from things like sunburn, mosquito bites and unsanitary pool water.

Check out these articles from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on pool water safety, Zika virus and ways to prevent it, and proper sun protection.

Most of all, be prepared and protected and enjoy these precious summer months!

- [Zika Virus Prevention](#)
- [How to Avoid Mosquito Bites](#)
- [Healthy Swimming](#)
- [Sun Safety](#)



“Take Your Mother to the Doctor”: How You Can Help Prevent Opioid Addiction

By Anne Ehrlich, Health Specialist

The opioid addiction epidemic dominates the news.

Opioid overdose deaths are now so common in Erie County (11 deaths per week), that Erie County Executive Mark Polancarz said that if we continue on this trajectory, opioid deaths will negate recent population gains!

There are many possibilities for intervention. You, as a parent/guardian, can have a role.

One simple intervention is to go to doctors' appointments with your family members and discuss pain management for medical procedures. A kidney stone is painful, but does it require 30 days of oxycodone? What about a

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- How long should pain last if there are no complications?
- What are the choices for pain treatment?
- Can you get a prescription for only 2, 3 or 6 pills?
- Should you still take the pills if the pain is better?
- What do you do with leftover pills?

wisdom tooth extraction? An anterior cruciate ligament repair? Appendectomy?

One mother reported that at the pre-op appointment for her son's hernia repair, he re-

ceived a 30 day prescription of hydrocodone. How can you tell if you have complications, if you are taking strong pain medication every six hours for a month?

As a parent/guardian, you can be there to talk about these common procedures and ask what is reasonable pain, and how long should it require strong addictive drugs. Anyone who ever pushed an 8½ pound baby through a cervix knows that life is painful, but pain rarely requires opioids, and certainly not for 30 days.

We hold “Take Your Mother to School” Day. To help prevent opioid addiction, let's “Take your mother (father/guardian/advocate) to the doctor.”



CDC Survey – High School Kids Exhibit Risky Behaviors

By Anne Ehrlich, Health Specialist

According to the [CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015 \(YRBS\)](#) our high school kids continue to exhibit risky behaviors that significantly impact their health. Here are some "highlights" of the survey:

- 11.5% had sexual intercourse with four or more persons during their life.
- 41.5% of high school students nationwide, among the 61.3% who drove a car or other vehicle during the month before the survey, had texted or emailed while driving.
- 32.8% drank alcohol, and 21.7% had used marijuana.
- 10.8% of high school students had smoked cigarettes and 7.3% had used smokeless tobacco.

- 41.7% had played video or computer games or used a computer for something that was not school work for 3 or more hours per day on an average school day.

- During the week before the survey, 5.2% of high school students had not eaten fruit or drank 100% fruit juice, and 6.7% had not eaten vegetables.

- 13.9% were obese and 16.0% were overweight.

The YRBS data are used to assess progress towards the goals of Healthy People 2020. These goals are in alignment with New York State PTA's [Basic Policy](#) and can be used to direct and inspire healthy kids programs in your schools.



Meningococcal Vaccine Required

By Anne Ehrlich, Health Specialist

Is your child entering 7th or 12th grade in September? You may want to make a doctor's appointment for them this summer.

The NYS Department of Health (DOH) has informed health care providers that a new regulation regarding vaccination requirements for school admission is expected to be adopted and in effect by September 1, 2016.

This regulation will require that every child entering 7th grade receive one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine. Every child entering 12th grade should have received one dose before age 16 and a second dose after age 16.

Twelfth graders who have not received the early dose must receive a booster dose on a prescribed schedule. Some older forms of the vaccine may not be sufficient. Your physician should discuss this with you at your visit.

Under Public Health Law §2164, students not complying will be denied admission to school.

There may be medical and religious exemptions that will require documentation.

After two doses, 98% of people will have effective blood levels of antibodies against meningococcal disease, which can be devastating. The high school and college years are the period of greatest risk.

Outbreaks are uncommon but there is a 10-15% death rate, and 10-19% of survivors suffer brain damage, hearing loss or limb loss.

Read more about this requirement [here](#).



Summer is SPF Time

By Anne Ehrlich, Health Specialist

Consumer Reports' July 2016 issue featured a product report on sunscreen efficacy.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that a product actually deliver the sun protection factor (SPF) claimed on the label.

Consumer Reports tested 65 products sold in the US, and found that about half did not perform as claimed.

Check out their [sunscreen article](#) for what to look for in a sunscreen, how to use the products, and other information on sun protection.

Consumer Reports product ratings are available to paid subscribers, or reported [here](#) by WebMD.

Say Yes to Leadership!

By Antoinette Darden-Cintron, Leadership Development Coordinator

You might think leaders are born, but leaders are developed, too!

Your unit or council is being run by one of these types of leaders.

But no matter the kind of leader, someone has taken the time to say yes to leadership!

Not only a yes to being a PTA officer, but also a yes to:

- Directly supporting the children and staff of a particular school or district;
- Advocating for the best for all children; and

- Being a change-maker and influencer!

Each yes is at the heart of the grassroots membership that makes up this association!

For some, leadership can be scary. But with the right support and tools, leadership can be a fulfilling endeavor that enriches our lives and those around us. PTA provides the support needed to be a great leader in the following ways:

- Vast in-person training opportunities for almost every role and at every level in PTA.
- Virtual learning opportunities convenient for our busy lives.

- Resources/periodicals such as the [Resource Guide](#), [New York Parent Teacher](#), [Fast Facts](#).

- Your leaders from National, New York State and Region PTAs are just a phone call or email away.

Member, I say to you, there will come a time when you will be asked to serve your local, region, state or maybe even National PTA. Don't be afraid to say yes! We are here to ensure your success.

The work that you do, advocating for all children, is an endeavor we are all committed to saying yes to!

Leadership Vacancies – What Does a PTA Unit Do?

By Gracemarie Rozea, NYS PTA 1st Vice President

Has your PTA unit recently held elections and now there is a vacancy in one of the leadership positions? Or, perhaps an officer resigned during the school year?

For a PTA unit to function, there are three positions that must be filled: president, treasurer and secretary. If your unit finds itself with a vacant position, there are resources to help you.

Check your bylaws for specifics related to your PTA, located in ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS AND THEIR ELECTION – Section 4 in your bylaws.

You can get a copy of your unit's bylaws from your unit president, or reach out to your region director for assistance. Click [here](#) to find your region director.

You will find additional information on page 15 of the *NYS PTA Resource Guide*, Section 7 – Bylaws, Nominations & Elections. Click [here](#) for easy access.

Awesome in Niagara #NYSPTAAwesome



Niagara Region PTA Spelling Bee Chair Christine Hannam on stage at the 2016 Niagara Region PTA 4th and 5th Grade Spelling Bee.

Each year, 4th and 5th grade students across Niagara Region compete in their local PTA spelling bee.

The top three 4th and 5th grade spellers are invited to compete in the region-wide contest.



What's your Awesome story?

Email your pictures, articles, links to videos, social media posts, flyers, etc. to NYS PTA at NYSPTAAwesome@nyspta.org or share them and use the hashtag **#NYSPTAAwesome!**

Thanks for being Awesome!

PTA Reflections – Six Receive National Honors

By Amanda Tobias, Reflections Specialist

The PTA [Reflections](#) program offers students the opportunity to create works of art for fun and positive recognition.

Students in prekindergarten through grade 12 are encouraged to submit works of art in dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts.

This year, NYS PTA proudly announces that six New York students received National PTA recognition and honors. The 2015-2016 theme was “Let Your Imagination Fly.”



Thea Chen
Visual Arts, Primary
Nassau Region
National Award of Excellence



Jake Katzman
Film Production, Intermediate
Suffolk Region
National Award of Merit

The West

The west
The west
lookin' for a kind place
lookin' for the west

The west
The west
Lookin' for a kind place
Lookin' for the west.

Every night two days a week,
We go to the "hall"
There's dancing, laughter, and people singin' songs

Everyone's got a story
From raging mountains to fighting crocodiles.

Sittin' on the porch in the old rocking chair
Singin' stuff like
"The goat got whippers but it don't get horns"
Oh, sittin' on the porch.

I have never seen a place like this
It's the nicest place I've ever seen

It's got family, friends, and children
To sing, dance, and play

The west
The west
Lookin' for a kind place
Lookin' for the west

The west
The west
Lookin' for a kind place
Lookin' for the west

McKenna Schneider
Literature, Intermediate
Southwestern Region
National Award of Merit

Judgement Day

Composed by:
Matthew Greene

Matthew Greene
Music Composition, High School
Nassau Region
National Award of Merit



Michael J. Orgera
Visual Arts, Intermediate
Suffolk Region
National Award of Merit



Sophia Chen
Visual Arts, Middle School
Nassau Region
National Award of Merit

Use Your PTA Membership Card This Summer!

By Aimee Tweedie, NYPT Editor | Communications / Marketing Manager

Your PTA Membership Card can help create great summer memories!

Are you thinking about visiting Orlando? [Orlando Employee Discounts](#) can help you create a fun-filled family vacation.

Is your family into sports, concerts or roller coasters? [Ticket Monster](#) can save you

money on concert tickets, baseball games, theme parks and movies.



Do you live in or plan to visit the Capital District or Adirondacks? Ride a zipline at [Mountain Ridge Adventure](#) in Glenville. Or visit [Six Flags Great Escape](#) in Lake George. Order tickets ahead of time and avoid the line.

Joining your local PTA doesn't just benefit your child. Your PTA membership can bring your family closer together this summer.

UPCOMING FALL EVENTS

DADS TAKE YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL DAY



SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

NYS PTA 120TH ANNUAL CONVENTION



NOVEMBER 11-13, 2016
Saratoga Springs, NY

JULY-AUGUST AWARENESS EVENTS

JULY

[Fireworks Safety Month](#)

[Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month](#)

[UV Safety Month](#)

2nd week in July – [National Therapeutic Recreation Week](#)



AUGUST

[National Immunization Awareness Month](#)

[Children's Eye Health and Safety Month](#)

[Back to School Safety Month](#)

August 2 – [National Night Out](#)

August 17-September 5 – [Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over](#)

August 31 – [International Overdose Awareness Day](#)

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